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08 March 1999

TITLE OF INVENTION	RECEIVING APPARATUS AND METHOD
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Applicants herewith submit to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

- This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
- This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
- This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
- A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
- A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
 - is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
- A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)), including 11 sheets of formal drawings and a copy of the International Search Report.
- Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
 - are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - have not been made and will not be made.
- A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
- An oath or declaration of the inventors (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).
- The annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Items 11. to 16. below concern other document(s) or information included:

- An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
- An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
- A FIRST preliminary amendment.
- A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.
- A substitute specification.
- A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
- Other items or information:

PCT/ISA/210, PCT/RO/101

References for IDS

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U.S. APPLICATION NO.(If known, see 37 C.F.R. 1.50)

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.
PCT/JP00/01385ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO.
450106-0239417. The following fees are submitted:(CALCULATIONS /PTO USE ONLY)**Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5):**

Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor
 international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2) paid to USPTO and
 International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO... \$1000.00

International preliminary examination fee (37 C.F.R. 1.482)
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 paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)).....\$ 710.00

International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482)
 But all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4).....\$ 690.00

International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482)
 and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4).....\$ 100.00

ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT = (\$ 860.00)

Surcharge of **\$130.00** for furnishing the oath or declaration later than 20 30 (\$ /
 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).

<u>10</u> Claims	/	Number Filed	/Number Extra	/Rate	(
Total Claims	/ 10 - 20 =	/	0	'X \$18.00	(\$ 0.00
Independent Claims	/ 2- 3 =	/	<u>0</u>	/X \$80.00	(\$ 0.00
Multiple dependent claim(s) (if applicable)				/+ \$260.00	(\$

TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS = (\$ 860.00)

Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity (/
 statement must also be filed. (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28). (/

SUBTOTAL = (\$ 860.00)

Processing fee of **\$130.00** for furnishing the English translation later than (/
 20 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).+ (\$ /

TOTAL NATIONAL FEE = (\$ 860.00)

Fee for recording the enclosed assignments (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment
 must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31) \$40.00 per property + (\$ 0.00/
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NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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Dated: November 7, 2000


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25,506
 REGISTRATION NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

Receiving apparatus and method

Technical Field

The invention relates to receiving apparatus and method in which digital contents which has been segmented and transmitted on a unit basis of a meaningful structure and meta-information associated for it are received and the received digital contents can be scheduled and reproduced on the basis of the meta-information and the setting by the user.

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Background Art

Hitherto, a recording and a reproduction of contents broadcasted by a television broadcasting, a radio broadcasting, or the like have been performed by various methods. For example, in the television broadcasting, a video recording apparatus is connected to a television receiver and the recording and reproduction of a broadcasted program or the like are performed. Similarly, in the radio broadcasting, a radio receiver and a sound recording apparatus are connected and the recording and reproduction of a broadcasted program or the like are performed. In case of monitoring the broadcasting, the user selects a target to be monitored on a program unit basis and monitors it simultaneously with the reception, or after the program is recorded by the foregoing video recording apparatus or sound recording apparatus, the

user reproduces and monitors the recorded contents.

Hitherto, with respect to the monitoring of the broadcasting, a degree of freedom of the user is extremely low. Fig. 10 schematically shows such a monitoring of the broadcasting according to the prior art. Fig. 10A shows contents which is distributed by the broadcasting. In this case, the contents denotes a program which is broadcasted and distributed. In case of monitoring the broadcasted contents simultaneously with the reception, there is a problem such that the user merely can monitor continuous data which is distributed by the broadcasting as a time-sequence as it is at the time when it is transmitted as shown in Fig. 10C.

In the case where the broadcasted contents is recorded once by the video recording apparatus and, thereafter, reproduced, the video recording by the video recording apparatus is performed simultaneously with the reception of the contents as shown in Fig.

10B. After completion of the distribution of the whole contents, the recorded contents is reproduced and the reproduced contents is monitored by the user (Fig. 10C).

In this case, the user can time-sequentially operate the recorded contents by performing a fast-forward reproduction or rewinding reproduction at the time of reproduction. However, since the recording and

a management of the recorded contents are usually performed on a unit basis of a relatively large unit such as a program unit, there is a problem such that the degree of freedom regarding the monitoring of the 5 contents by the user is low.

Disclosure of Invention

It is, therefore, an object of the invention to provide digital contents receiving apparatus and method for enabling the user to time-sequentially 10 operate contents which has been broadcasted and distributed as continuous data.

To solve the above problem, according to the invention, there is provided a receiving apparatus to which segment data obtained by segmenting contents into meaningful segments and meta-information including a 15 unique ID every segment data are distributed and which receive the distributed segment data and meta-information, comprising: receiving means for receiving the segment data; storing means for storing the segment data received by the receiving means as segments as 20 they are and storing the meta-information of the segment data received together with the segment data in association with the received segment data; and reproduction control means for controlling and 25 reproducing the received segment data and/or the segment data stored in the storing means every segment data in accordance with a setting.

According to the invention, there is provided a receiving method whereby segment data obtained by segmenting contents into meaningful segments and meta-information including a unique ID every segment data are distributed and the distributed segment data and meta-information are received, comprising: a receiving step of receiving the segment data; a storing step of storing the segment data received in the receiving step as segments as they are and storing the meta-information of the segment data received together with the segment data in association with the received segment data; and a reproduction control step of controlling and reproducing the received segment data and/or the segment data stored in the storing step every segment data in accordance with a setting.

As mentioned above, according to the invention, the segment data obtained by segmenting the contents into the meaningful segments and the meta-information including the unique ID every segment data are received, the received segment data is stored as segments as they are into the storing means. The meta-information corresponding to the segment data is stored in the storing means in association with the segment data. The stored segment data is controlled and reproduced every segment data in accordance with the setting. Therefore, the contents can be reproduced at a high degree of freedom.

Brief Description of Drawings

Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram showing an example of a construction of a contents distributing system which can be applied to the invention; Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing an example of a construction of a receiving terminal apparatus according to an embodiment; Fig. 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D are schematic diagrams showing an example of a reception, a storage, and a reproduction (monitoring) of contents according to the invention; Fig. 4 is a schematic diagram for explaining a segmentation of the contents; Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram for explaining the operation for segmenting the contents in a layer manner; Fig. 6 is a schematic flowchart for processes in a range from the reception to the reproduction of the distributed contents; Fig. 7 is a schematic diagram showing an example of more detailed flowchart and user setting of a storing control process; Figs. 8A, 8B and 9 are schematic diagrams showing an example of a method of expressing the layered contents; and Fig. 10A, 10B and 10C are schematic diagrams schematically showing a monitoring of a broadcasting according to the prior art.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

An embodiment of the invention will now be described hereinbelow with reference to the drawings. Fig. 1 shows an example of a construction of a contents

distributing system which can be applied to the invention. A broadcast network 1 is a network which can simultaneously distribute information to a number of users like, for example, a broadcasting. Contents 5 is distributed from a broadcasting station 2 to the user through the broadcast network 1. More specifically, the contents stored in a server apparatus which the broadcasting station 2 has is outputted from the server apparatus and received by receiving terminal 10 apparatuses 4A and 4B of the user through the broadcast network 1. It will be obviously understood that a further large number of users exist and the receiving terminal apparatuses of the number as many as the number of users also exist.

15 The contents is a general denomination of, for example, video data, audio data, text data, map data, and the like. In the example of Fig. 1, particularly, the contents is a program which is broadcasted by the broadcasting station 2 by a 20 television broadcasting or a radio broadcasting and comprises a video image and/or audio sound. It is assumed hereinbelow that the contents which is distributed by the broadcasting station 2 is a digital television broadcasting such that audio sound, a video 25 image, and the like are broadcasted by a digital system.

Although the details will be described

hereinbelow, the contents is segmented on the basis of a meaningful structure and distributed as segment data by the broadcasting station 2. At this time, meta-information showing the meaning of the segment data is distributed in association with the segment data. The meta-information includes a unique ID showing the corresponding segment data.

The contents is not limited to the data of the digital system but a video signal and an audio signal of an analog system can be also included in the contents. A combination of those plurality of data and signals, for example, the program of the television broadcasting mentioned above, a video clip comprising music data, video data, and artist information regarding the music data, an electronic publication comprising a text, a figure, and the like formed by digital data, and the like can be also included as contents.

On the user side, the contents received by the receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B are reproduced and monitored. The receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B have storing means of a video image and sound and can store the received contents. The stored contents can be reproduced and monitored at different time. Upon reproduction, the receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B can operate the contents on a segmentation unit basis and perform a

rearrangement, an omission, a repetition, or the like of the segment data on the basis of instructions of the user.

The contents which is distributed from the broadcasting station 2 is formed by, for example, information providing sources 3A and 3B. The formed contents has previously been segmented on the basis of a meaningful structure and respectively stored in, for example, server apparatuses which the information providing sources 3A and 3B have. Information regarding the segment data obtained by segmenting the contents is held as meta-information into the server apparatuses. The contents is supplied from the information providing sources 3A and 3B to the broadcasting station 2. Naturally, a further large number of information providing sources can exist.

The broadcasting station 2, information providing sources 3A and 3B, and receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B are mutually connected by a bidirectional network 5. Information can be requested from the receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B to the information providing sources 3A and 3B or broadcasting station 2 through the bidirectional network 5. For example, the information providing sources 3A and 3B can provide the meta-information or contents to the receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B through the bidirectional network 5. It is also

possible to provide the contents from the information providing sources 3A and 3B to the broadcasting station 2 through the bidirectional network 5 and transmit them from the broadcasting station 2 to the receiving 5 terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B.

Fig. 2 shows an example of a construction common to the receiving terminal apparatuses 4A and 4B (hereinafter, represented by the receiving terminal apparatus 4A). A channel by which the contents which 10 the user intends to monitor is distributed is selected in a receiving unit 11 by the operation of the receiving terminal apparatus 4A of the user. The distributed contents is received by an antenna 10. The received contents is outputted from the receiving unit 15 11.

The contents outputted from the receiving unit 11 is supplied to a storage control unit 12. In the storage control unit 12, the segment data of the supplied contents is stored in a storing unit 13, and 20 the meta-information associated for the segment data is extracted and stored in the storing unit 13. A unique ID of the segment data included in the meta-information corresponding to the stored segment data is allocated to an ID list.

25 A recording medium such as hard disk or semiconductor memory to which a random access can be performed is preferably used as a storing unit 13. A

magnetic tape can be also used as a recording medium of the storing unit 13.

The segment data of the contents stored in the storing unit 13 is reproduced by the control of a reproduction control unit 15. A request for the segment data to be reproduced is issued from the reproduction control unit 15 to the storing unit 13 on the basis of user set information of a user set managing unit 14. The segment data based on the request and a reference result of the meta-information are returned to the reproduction control unit 15. On the basis of it, the reproduction control unit 15 reads out the necessary segment data from the storing unit 13, reproduces, and supplies to an output unit 16. For example, a simultaneous monitoring in which the reproduction is performed almost simultaneously with the reception by the receiving unit 11, a storage reproduction monitoring in which the segment data stored in the storing unit 13 is reproduced later and monitored, or the like is executed on the basis of the control of the reproduction control unit 15. A reproduction output is supplied to the output unit 16. For example, if it is video data, it is displayed to a display.

The storage control of the segment data to the storing unit 13 according to the storage control unit 12 and the reproduction control of the segment

data stored in the storing unit 13 by the reproduction control unit 15 are set by the user set managing unit 14. The user set managing unit 14 has operators such as a switch for outputting a predetermined control 5 signal by the operation of the user, or the like.

Further, the user set managing unit 14 has memory means such as a memory or the like, and information based on the operation of the operator is stored therein. The user set information set by the user set 10 managing unit 14 on the basis of the operation of the user is supplied to the storage control unit 12 and reproduction control unit 15.

The whole receiving terminal apparatus 4A is controlled by a syscon 17 comprising, for example, a 15 microprocessor, a memory, or the like. The syscon 17 can communicate with the outside through the bidirectional network 5. For example, information can be requested to the broadcasting station 2 or information providing sources 3A and 3B through the 20 bidirectional network 5. It is also possible to receive the information transmitted through the bidirectional network 5 and supply it to, for example, the storage control unit 12.

Fig. 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D show an example of the 25 reception, storage, and reproduction (monitoring) of the contents according to the invention. In Fig. 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D, the direction from the left side to the

right side is the direction of the time-sequence. Fig.

3A shows the contents which is distributed to the broadcast network 1. As mentioned above, the contents is distributed as a data train segmented to a plurality of segments having a meaning in terms of a structure.

5 The segment data obtained by segmenting the distributed contents into the segments are now assumed to be segments A to E. The segment data A to E can be mutually discriminated by the unique ID included in the 10 meta-information corresponding to each of them.

10 The corresponding meta-information is added to each of the segment data A to E. The meta-information comprises: for example, a position and time-dependent arrangement in the structure of the 15 whole contents of the corresponding segment data; and attribute information of the segment data such as size (length) of segment data and the like. The meta-information is made to correspond to the corresponding segment data and stored in the storing unit 13 together 20 with the segment data A to E. When the meta-information is stored in the storing unit 13, the information regarding the arrangement of the segment data A to E included in the meta-information is converted into arrangement information of the segment 25 data A to E in the storing unit 13, for example, into address information.

Fig. 3B schematically shows a state where the

contents distributed as mentioned above is received by the receiving terminal apparatus 4A and the received contents is stored in the storing unit 13. The contents is received in distributing order as shown in 5 Fig. 3A. The meta-information is made to correspond to the corresponding segment data, respectively. The segment data A to E and the meta-information corresponding to each of the segment data A to E are stored in the storing unit 13. The storage of the 10 segment data and the meta-information into the storing unit 13 can be set to a temporary storage.

Figs. 3C and 3D show an example of the reception in Fig. 3B and a reproducing method of the stored contents according to the embodiment. A monitor example 1 in Fig. 3C is an example in which the user 15 operation is performed during the simultaneous monitoring. The operation is set by the operation of the user in such a manner that during the monitoring of the contents, the segment data B is repetitively monitored and, after that, the sequel of the segment data B is monitored. By the control of the 20 reproduction control unit 15 based on the user set information according to the setting, the segment data B stored in the storing unit 13 is repetitively read out and reproduced. Subsequent to the second 25 reproduction of the segment data B, the segment data C and subsequent data are reproduced and monitored in the

same order as that upon reception.

Further, after the segment data C is monitored, a pause of the monitoring is set by the user operation. On the basis of the setting, the reproduction from the storing unit 13 is temporarily stopped. When the pause state is cancelled by the operation of the user, the reproduction is started from the segment D next to the segment data C to which the stop has been instructed.

A monitor example 2 of Fig. 3D is an example in which the reproduction of the partial segment data is omitted and the reproducing order is exchanged at the time of the storage, reproduction, and monitoring. On the basis of the meta-information of the segment data A to E stored in the storing unit 13, the necessary segment data among the segment data A to E is selected and reproduced. At the same time, the reproducing order of the segment data is exchanged on the basis of the meta-information so as to be different from that upon reproduction. Also in a manner similar to the above, on the basis of the user set information, the above process is performed by controlling the reading operation of the segment data A to E stored in the storing unit 13 by the reproduction control unit 15.

The segmentation of the contents will now be described by using Figs. 4 and 5. A program "language

course" in the television broadcasting is now considered as an example of the contents. The contents can be simply structured as shown in an example in Fig.

4. In this example, the contents has a structure

5 comprising five elements of "text", "newly appearing words", "translation", "important point", and "practice". That is, contents 20 as "language course" comprises segment data 21A, 21B, 21C, 21D, and 21E corresponding to "text", "newly appearing words",
10 "translation", "important point", and "practice", respectively. As mentioned above, the segment data 21A to 21E can be mutually discriminated by the IDs included in each corresponding meta-information.

15 By using such a structure by segmenting the contents 20, the "language course" can be monitored as shown in Figs. 3C and 3D mentioned above. That is, in the example of Fig. 3C, according to the monitor example 1, the monitoring is started together with the start of the reception and "newly appearing words" are repetitively monitored twice during the monitoring.

20 Further, the monitoring is paused for an interval between "translation" and "important point". After the restart, remaining "important point" and "practice" are monitored. In the example of Fig. 3D, the contents is stored once in the storing unit 13 and, after 25 completion of the reception of the contents, it is monitored. The monitoring is started and the

monitoring of "newly appearing words" is omitted during the monitoring. After "translation" and "important point" are monitored first, "newly appearing words" are monitored.

5 The invention is not limited to the example shown in Fig. 4 but it is also possible to further finely structure the segment data 21A to 21E and segment the data on the basis of them.

10 Fig. 5 shows an example in which the structure of Fig. 4 is further complicated and segmented. In the diagram, the direction from the left side to the right side is the direction of the time-sequence. A structure in which the contents has been layered is shown. In Fig. 5, each of elements 40, 41, 15 42A, 42B, 43A to 43C, 44A to 44D, 45A, 45B, 46A, and 46B (hereinafter, collectively expressed as "elements 40 to 46") shown by circles are elements of the actual contents. For example, the elements 40 to 46 denote substantial data such as audio data, text data, video data, and the like.

20 Tags 31A to 31I, 51A to 51C, and 50 shown by quadrangles are provided to structure the contents. For example, the elements 40 to 46 are classified and grouped by those tags. Further, a structure in which 25 the contents has been layered by grouping the other tags is obtained.

In the example of Fig. 5, for example, the

contents "language course" 50 comprises a plurality of "programs" 51A, 51B, 51C, ... in which they are the contents by themselves and which are periodically distributed. Each "program" is further layered to a plurality of stages. For example, the "program" 51B of the nth time has the element 40 and a plurality of tags 31A, 31B, 31C, and 31D as a lower structure. Each of the tags 31A, 31B, 31C, and 31D has a plurality of elements and tags as a further lower structure.

As mentioned above, by allowing the contents to have the layer structure, a data management can be easily performed on each of the side which produces the contents and the user side. When seen from the user side, a selection such that "previous review" shown by the tag 31A and "practice" shown by the tag 31D are omitted and only "text" shown by the tag 31B is monitored can be more easily made than in Fig. 4 mentioned above. Further, it is also possible to select a desired program for each of the elements 40 to 46 and monitor. On the contents producing side, for example, the data can be also easily used again for each of the elements 40 to 46.

In the example of Fig. 5, the contents is segmented, for example, on an element unit basis and can be mutually discriminated by the ID included in the meta-information corresponding to each of the elements 40 to 46. In this instance, in the case where the

contents is distributed as a series, it is assumed that the ID which can be unconditionally specified in the series without limiting to the inside of the contents of one time which is continuously transmitted is
5 allocated to the segment data. For instance, in case of the contents "language course" 50 in Fig. 5, the contents is distributed as a series in order of "programs" 51A, 51B, 51C, The ID of each element can be expressed by sequentially allocating the number
10 from the left side in Fig. 5 every layer. For example, the element 40 can be expressed by ID[n_1_1_1]. The ID of the element 43A (sentence 1) in the "program" 51B of the nth time in the series is set to [n_2_2_1]. The ID can be also allocated to the element on the basis of
15 another rule.

When the segment data received by the receiving terminal apparatus 4A is stored in the storing unit 13, it is managed by an ID list based on the IDs included in the meta-information corresponding to the segment data separately from the segment data itself or the meta-information associated for the segment data. Although the details will be explained hereinlater, in the case where the newly received segment data is stored in the storing unit 13, the ID list is referred to and the ID of the segment data is compared with the ID of the segment data which has already been stored in the storing unit 13. When the
20
25

5 ID of the newly received segment data coincides with
the ID of the segment data which has already been
stored, the newly received segment data is not stored
in the storing unit 13, so that the overlapped storage
of the same segment data is avoided.

For instance, in the example of Fig. 5, it is
assumed that the contents of "point" (tag 31I) in
"previous review" (tag 31F) of the "program" 51B of the
nth time coincide with "point" of the "program" 51A of
10 the (n-1)th time. That is, the sentence 1 (element
42A) of the contents of "point" in "previous review"
can be expressed by ID[n_2_2_1] in accordance with the
above rule. The data of the same contents as those of
the element 42A has already been received and stored as
contents of "point" of the "program" 51A of the (n-1)th
15 time. The ID of the data which has already been
received and stored is assumed to be [(n-1)_4_1_0]. In
this case, as an ID of the element 42A, for example,
the ID of the data in which the same contents have been
20 distributed earliest in the series is used. In this
example, ID [(n-1)_4_1_0] is used as an ID of the
element 42A.

When the data having the ID showing the data
distributed by the "program" 51A of the (n-1)th time is
25 received during the reception of the distribution of
the "program" 51B of the nth time, the ID list stored
in the storing unit 13 is referred to. Thus, assuming

that the corresponding segment data of the "program" 51A of the (n-1)th time distributed before the nth time has already been stored in the storing unit 13, only the meta-information of the newly received data is
5 added to the storing unit 13 and stored. This meta-information is allowed to be associated with the corresponding segment data which has already been stored.

Such a process for avoiding the overlapped
10 data storage by using the ID list as mentioned above is not limited to the foregoing example in which the data is distributed by the series but can be also applied to the case where the same segment data is distributed in one contents. Thus, the data can be efficiently stored
15 in the storing unit 13.

The processes for the reception, storage, and reproduction of the distributed contents in the receiving terminal apparatus 4A will now be described by using flowcharts of Figs. 6 and 7. Fig. 6
20 schematically shows processes from the reception to the reproduction of the distributed contents. In step S10, the distributed contents are received by the antenna 10 and supplied to the storage control unit 12 through the receiving unit 11.

25 A reproducing method of the received contents or the like is inputted to the user set managing unit 14 by the user (step S20). The user set information is

registered (step S21). As user set information which is set, there are the reproducing method of the contents, reservation information (program reservation list) of the contents which is received, and the like.

5 By setting the program reservation list, the reserved program can be automatically received and stored in the storing unit 13. As user set information, monitoring desired item information in the program for storing only the segment data which the user wants to monitor, 10 monitoring required time as a time that is required for monitoring, and information such as the number of times of repetition of a specific portion for repetitively reproducing the specific segment data, pause time for performing a pause, and the like are also further 15 included in the user set information.

By selecting the contents which the user wants to monitor without registering the user set information, the contents can be reproduced while receiving the contents.

20 In step S11, on the basis of the user set information registered in step S21, the storage of the received contents into the storing unit 13 is controlled by the storage control unit 12. The details of the process in step S11 will be explained 25 hereinlater. By the storage control in step S11, the received contents is stored in the storing unit 13 (step S12).

Next step S13 is a step of reproducing the contents stored in the storing unit 13. In this instance, the reproduction of the contents is automatically executed on the basis of the user set 5 information registered in step S21 mentioned above.

The details of the user setting regarding the reproduction will be explained hereinlater.

When the reproduction of the contents stored in the storing unit 13 is started in step S13 and a reproduction control instruction is issued by the user 10 during the reproduction (step S14), the processing routine advances to step S15. In step S15, the reading operation of the contents from the storing unit 13 is temporarily controlled by the control of the reproduction control unit 15 based on the instruction 15 of the user. For example, the temporary process such as repetitive reproduction or pause of the reproduction of the segment data during the reproduction according to the example of Fig. 3C mentioned above or change of the reproducing order of the segment data according to 20 the example of Fig. 3D is instructed in step S14. The reproduction based on the instruction is performed in step S15.

Fig. 7 is a more detailed flowchart for the storage control process in step S11 in Fig. 6 mentioned 25 above. The data reception (step S10 in Fig. 6) and the data storing process (step S12 in Fig. 6) are included

in Fig. 7. The reception is started and the segment data is received in step S30. The received data is supplied to the storage control unit 12 and the meta-information distributed together with the segment data is analyzed (step S31).

5 is analyzed (step S31).

The analyzed meta-information and the user set information set in step S21 in Fig. 6 are collated. On the basis of a result of the collation, whether it is necessary to store the received segment data or not is discriminated (step S32). If it is determined that there is no need to store the segment data, the processing routine advances to step S36. Whether the reception is finished or not is discriminated in step S36. If the reception is not finished, the processing routine is returned to step S30.

10 is discriminated (step S32). If it is determined that there is no need to store the segment data, the processing routine advances to step S36. Whether the reception is finished or not is discriminated in step S36. If the reception is not finished, the processing routine is returned to step S30.

15

If it is decided in step S32 that it is necessary to store the received segment data, the processing routine advances to step S33 and the ID included in the meta-information corresponding to the received segment data is extracted. The extracted ID information and the ID list of the segment data which has already been stored in the storing unit 13 are collated (step S34). If the same ID as that of the received segment data exists in the ID list, it is regarded that the segment data of the same contents as those of the segment data has already been stored in the storing unit 13 and is not new data. The

processing routine advances to step S36.

If it is determined in step S34 that the received segment data is the new data, the processing routine advances to step S35. In step S35, the received segment data and the meta-information of the segment data are stored in the storing unit 13. At the same time, if it is decided in step S34 that the received segment data is the new data, the ID of the segment data is added to the ID list.

After the received segment data and the meta-information of the segment data are stored in the storing unit 13 as mentioned above, the processing routine advances to step S36. In step S36, whether the receiving process has been finished or not is discriminated. If it is determined that the receiving process is not finished, the processing routine advances to step S30 and a procedure from the reception of the segment data is repeated. If it is determined that the receiving process has been finished, a series of processes is finished.

The user setting mentioned in steps S20 and S21 in Fig. 6 will now be more specifically explained. In the embodiment, three kinds of contents of (1) reservation of the monitoring desired program, (2) setting of the monitoring desired contents (items), and (3) automatic custom monitoring are presumed as contents which are set by the user setting. In the

reservation of the monitoring desired program of (1), the reserved program is automatically stored in the storing unit 13. In the setting of the monitoring desired contents (items) of (2), information about the necessity of each item comprising the segment data is registered on the basis of a program structure which has previously been obtained. The segment data of "necessary" (it is desired to monitor) is stored in the storing unit 13. On the contrary, it is also possible to set so that the segment data of "unnecessary" is not reproduced. In the automatic custom monitoring of (3), the reproduction is controlled in a manner such that the contents can be monitored in the automatically optimized format merely by setting, for example, the level of the user or the reproducing mode without setting the fine items or the like.

The contents of the user setting are not limited to the above three kinds of contents of (1), (2), and (3). It is also possible to set so as to combine those three kinds.

The automatic custom reproduction of (3) will now be described. In the case where the contents has a specific structure and the structure has already been known, the user can select the monitoring method by a simple method. The contents "language course" 50 of the construction shown in Fig. 5 is now considered as contents. In the following description, for example,

the elements 43A to 43C and 44A to 44C which are structured by the tag 31A showing "text" are expressed as "text" 31A. The other similar expressions are also similarly described.

5 For example, the user merely sets a degree of his own skill of a language, so that he can perform the reproduction according to the set degree of skill. As shown in an example in Fig. 8A, the degree of skill of the language of the user is set to three levels of 10 "introductory", "intermediate", and "advanced". In case of setting to "introductory", the reproducing method is set so that the "English" 31H of the "text" 31A is reproduced twice, the "Japanese translation" 31C is reproduced once, the number of times of the 15 "practice" 31E is set to two times, and the pause time in this instance is set to the time which is twice as long as the standard time, respectively. As shown in an example in Fig. 8B, the reproducing mode can be also set in accordance with the object. In the example of 20 Fig. 8B, three modes of "standard", "review", and "summary review" can be set in accordance with the object. In case of setting to "review", the reproduction is set so as to reproduce the "text" 31A, "point" 31D, and "practice" 31E. In case of setting to 25 "summary review", although not shown, the "text" 31A and "point" 31D stored in the storing unit 13 can be collectively reproduced by distributing the data a

plurality of number of times.

As mentioned above, in the case where the reproduction which has been set to the order different from that in the contents upon distribution is performed while, particularly, receiving the relevant contents, the receiving terminal apparatus 4A needs to preliminarily know the structure of the contents. In the broadcasting station 2, the contents structure described in a predetermined format is distributed by a predetermined method. In case of the contents structure as shown in the example of Fig. 5 mentioned above, as shown in an example in Fig. 9, the layer structure of the tags can be expressed by sandwiching it with parentheses ({ }). Apparently, the invention is not limited to this example but can use another expressing method.

The contents structure described as mentioned above is previously distributed to the receiving terminal apparatus 4A before the relevant contents is distributed. For example, the contents structure is distributed to the receiving terminal apparatus 4A by a method such that (1) it is preliminarily distributed as an EPG (Electronic Program Guide), (2) when the program is distributed, the contents structure is distributed as meta-information to the head of the contents, (3) the user who wants to monitor the relevant program obtains it from, for example, the broadcasting station

2 or information providing sources 3A and 3B by using
the bidirectional network 5 in Fig. 1, or the like. In
case of using the EPG of (1), for example, the contents
structure is added to the ordinary EPG data and
5 distributed.

The contents structure can be also
distributed by using two or three of those three
methods. For example, in case of the method of using
the EPG of (1) and the method of using the meta-
10 information of (2), the contents structure is described
by a simple structure such that it is useful for many
users. In case of requiring the more detailed contents
structure, the bidirectional network 5 of (3) is used.

Although it is assumed that the ID of the
15 segment data is included in the meta-information in the
above description, the invention is not limited to this
example. For instance, the ID can be also included in
the segment data itself.

As described above, according to the
20 invention, in the case where the contents is segmented
into the meaningful segments, the unique IDs are
allocated to the segment data, the meta-information is
associated therewith, and the contents is distributed,
there are effects such that the received segment data
25 is efficiently stored by using the ID and meta-
information on the receiving side, and the reproduction
of the contents can be flexibly performed by using the

ID and meta-information in accordance with a requirement of the user.

CLAIMS

1. A receiving apparatus to which segment data obtained by segmenting contents into meaningful segments and meta-information including a unique ID every said segment data are distributed and which receives the distributed segment data and meta-information, comprising:

receiving means for receiving the segment data;

10 storing means for storing the segment data received by said receiving means as said segments as they are and storing the meta-information of said segment data received together with said segment data in association with said received segment data; and

15 reproduction control means for controlling and reproducing said received segment data and/or said segment data stored in said storing means every said segment data in accordance with a setting.

2. A receiving apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

20 said storing means compares the meta-information of said stored segment data with the meta-information of segment data newly received, and when said newly received segment data and said stored segment data do not coincide, stores said newly received segment data.

25 3. A receiving apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein

the storage of said received segment data into said storing means and the reproduction of said segment data stored in said storing means are executed in parallel.

5

4. A receiving apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

said reproduction control means changes the reproducing order for every said segment data of said received segment data and/or said segment data stored in said storing means on the basis of set information.

10

5. A receiving apparatus according to claim 4, wherein

said reproduction control means executes said change during the reproduction of said segment data.

15

6. A receiving apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

said reproduction control means changes the number of times of reproduction for every said segment data of said received segment data and/or said segment data stored in said storing means on the basis of set information.

20

7. A receiving apparatus according to claim 6, wherein

25

said reproduction control means executes said change during the reproduction of said segment data.

8. A receiving apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein

5 said reproduction control means changes a reproducing interval for every said segment data of said received segment data and/or said segment data stored in said storing means on the basis of set information.

9. A receiving apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

10 said reproduction control means executes said change during the reproduction of said segment data.

10. A receiving method whereby segment data obtained by segmenting contents into meaningful segments and meta-information including a unique ID every said segment data are distributed and the distributed segment data and meta-information are received, comprising:

15 a receiving step of receiving the segment data;

20 a storing step of storing the segment data received in said receiving step as said segments as they are and storing the meta-information of said segment data received together with said segment data in association with said received segment data; and

25 a reproduction control step of controlling and reproducing said received segment data and/or said segment data stored in said storing step every said segment data in accordance with a setting.

ABSTRACT

Contents is segmented on a unit basis of a meaningful structure, meta-information regarding segment data is added to each segment data, and the 5 contents is distributed. The meta-information is attribute information of the segment data and constructed by positioning and time-dependent arrangement of the segment data in the contents structure, a unique ID, and the like. In a receiving 10 apparatus, the segment data and the corresponding meta-information are stored in association with each other. The segment data of the same ID is not stored on the basis of the meta-information. The reproduction can be controlled every segment data. When reproducing in 15 parallel with the reception of the contents, the repetitive reproduction or the pause of the reproduction of the desired segment data of the user can be performed. After the distribution of the contents, the order of the stored segment data can be 20 changed and the segment data is reproduced in accordance with the desire of the user.

Fig. 1

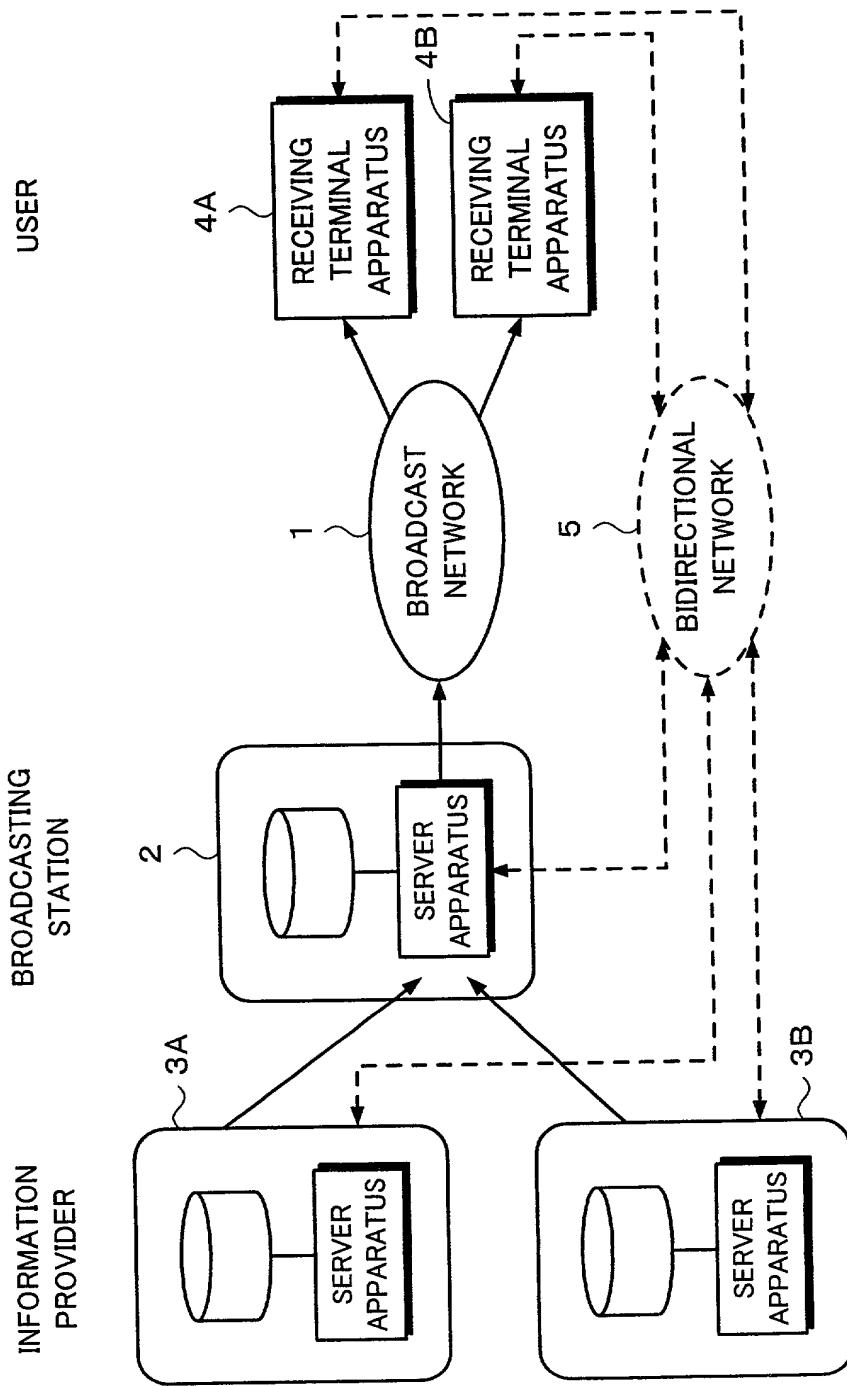
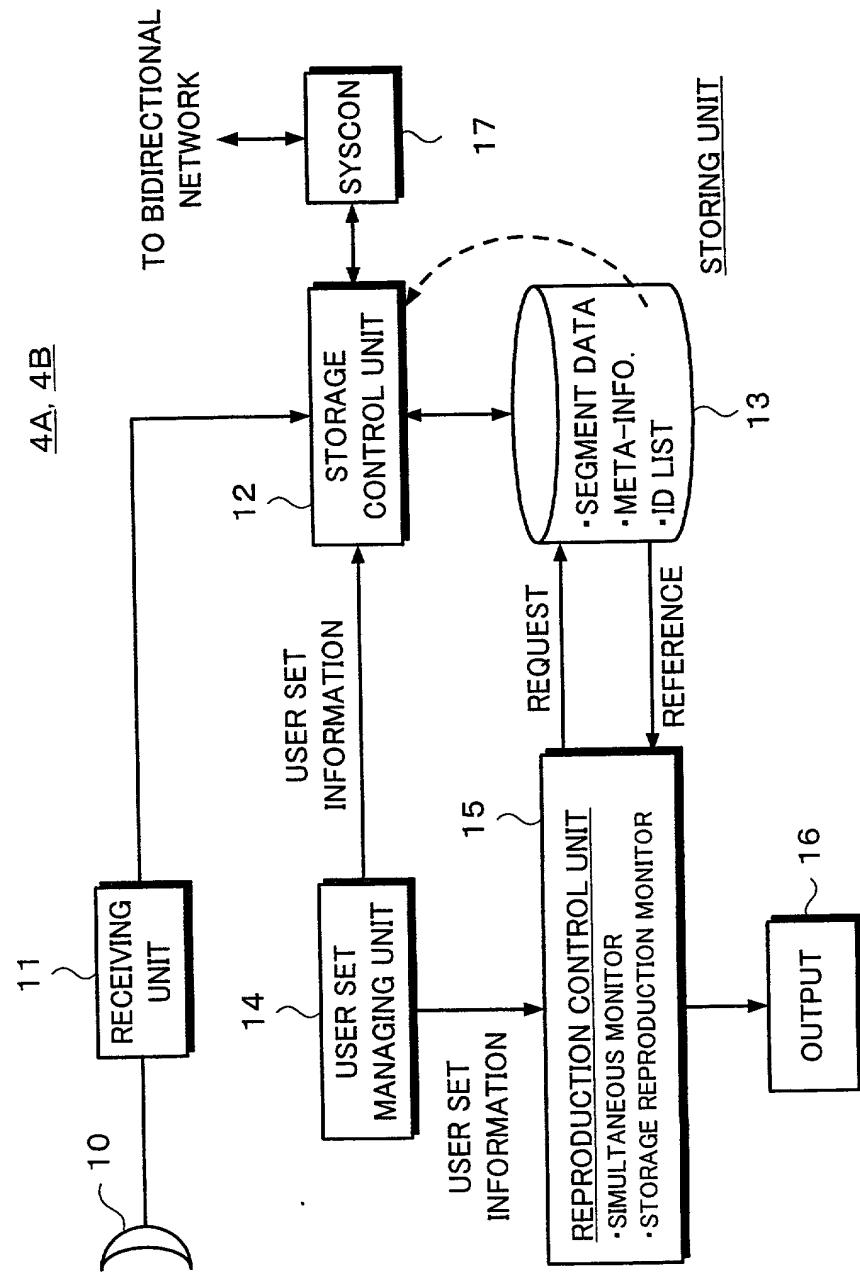


Fig. 2



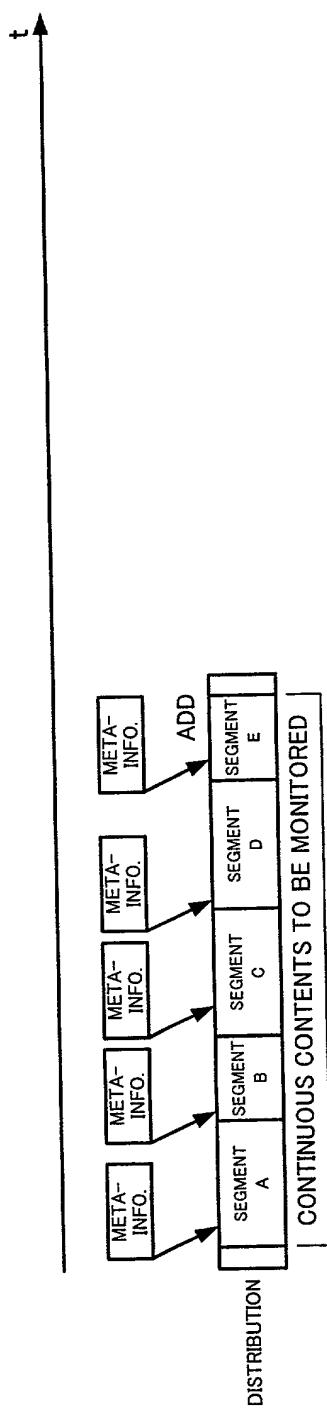


Fig. 3A

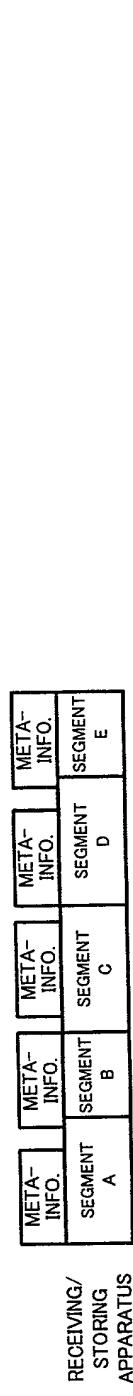


Fig. 3B



Fig. 3C



Fig. 3D

Fig. 4

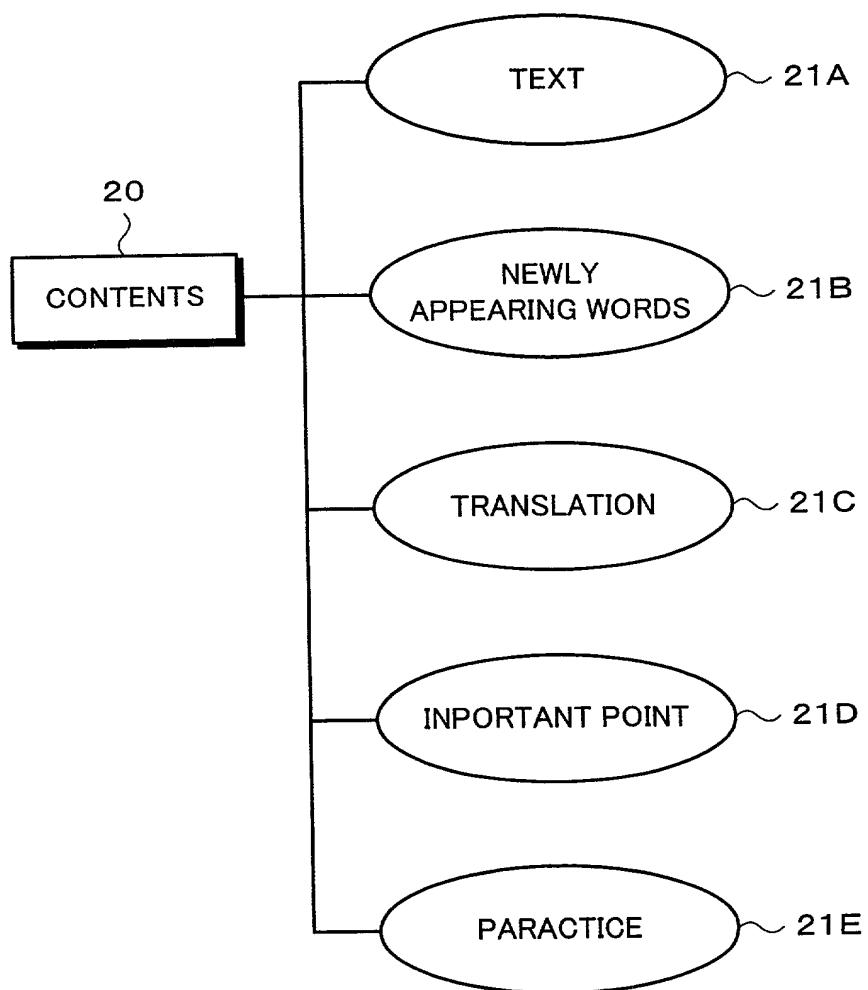


Fig. 5

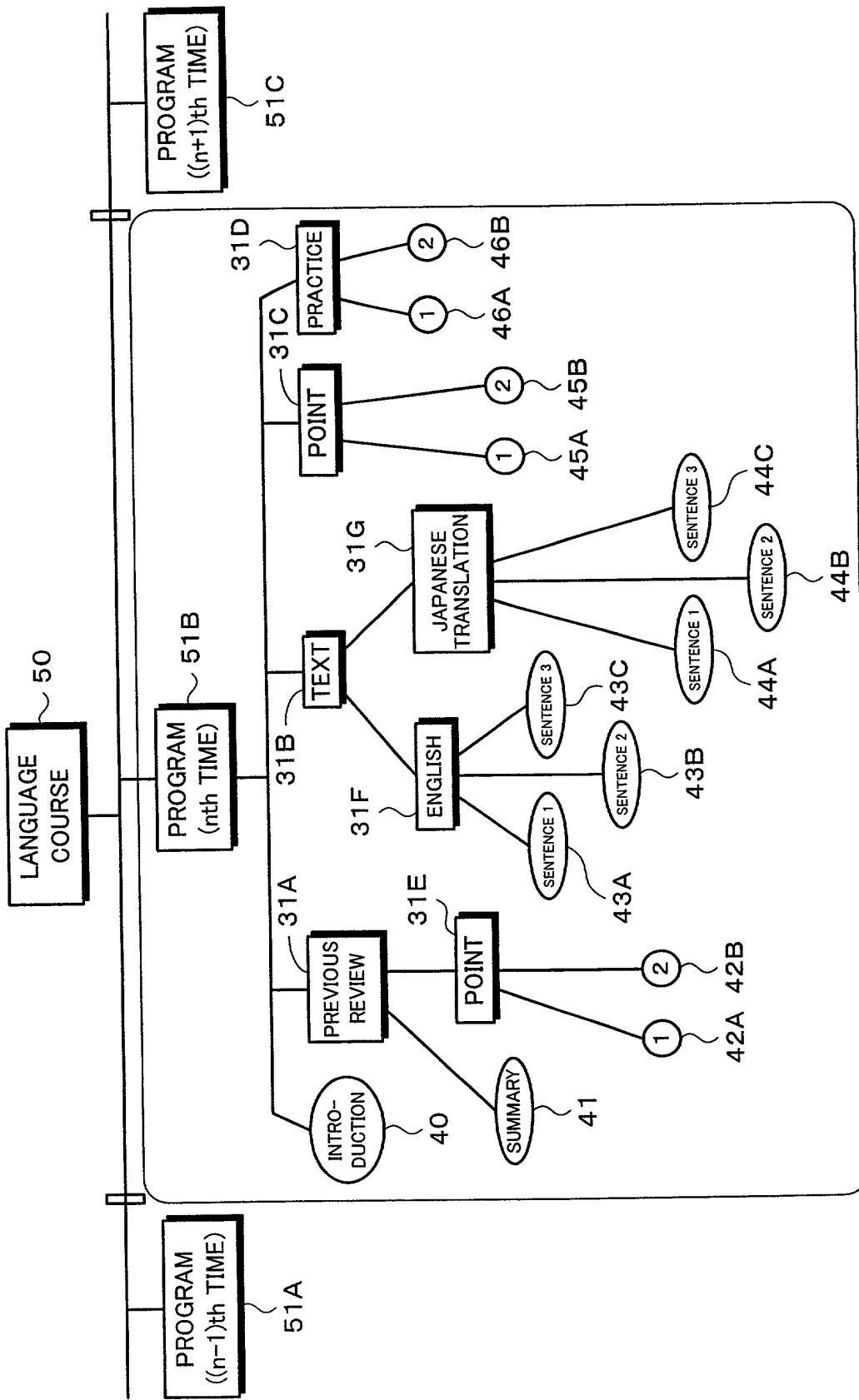


Fig. 6

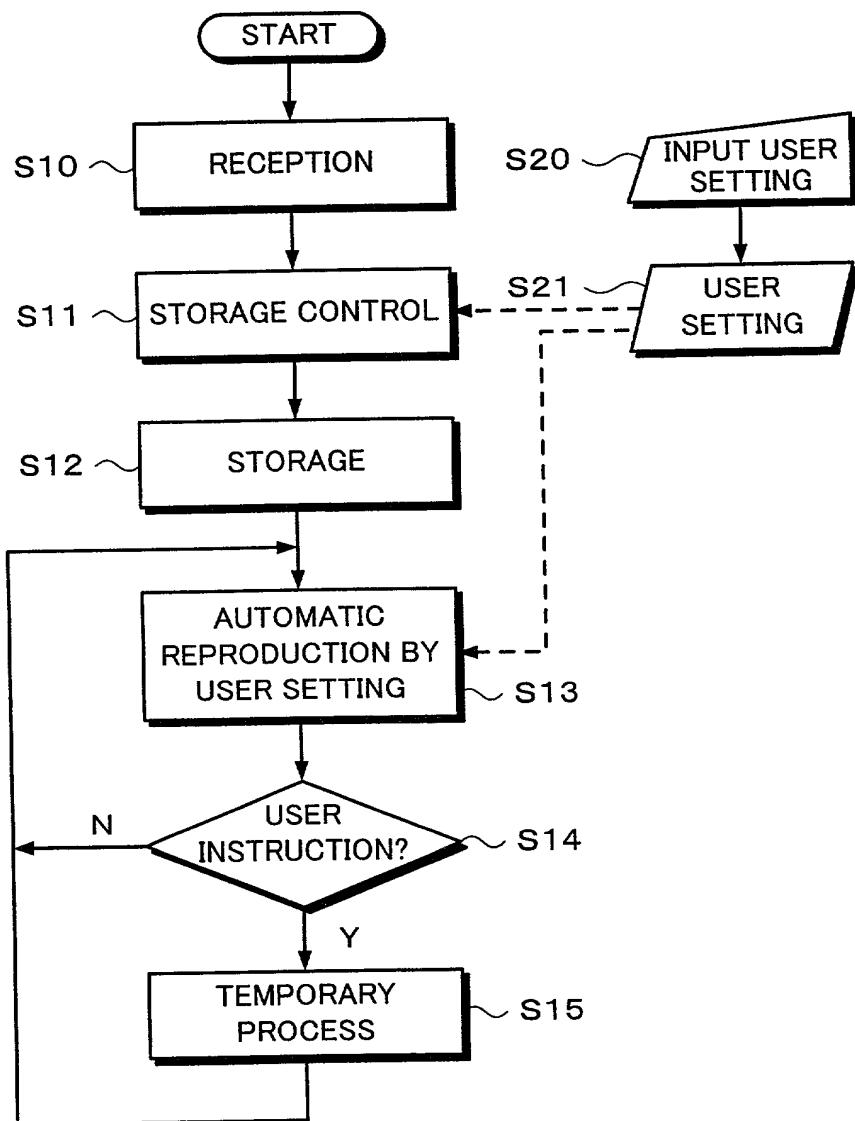


Fig. 7

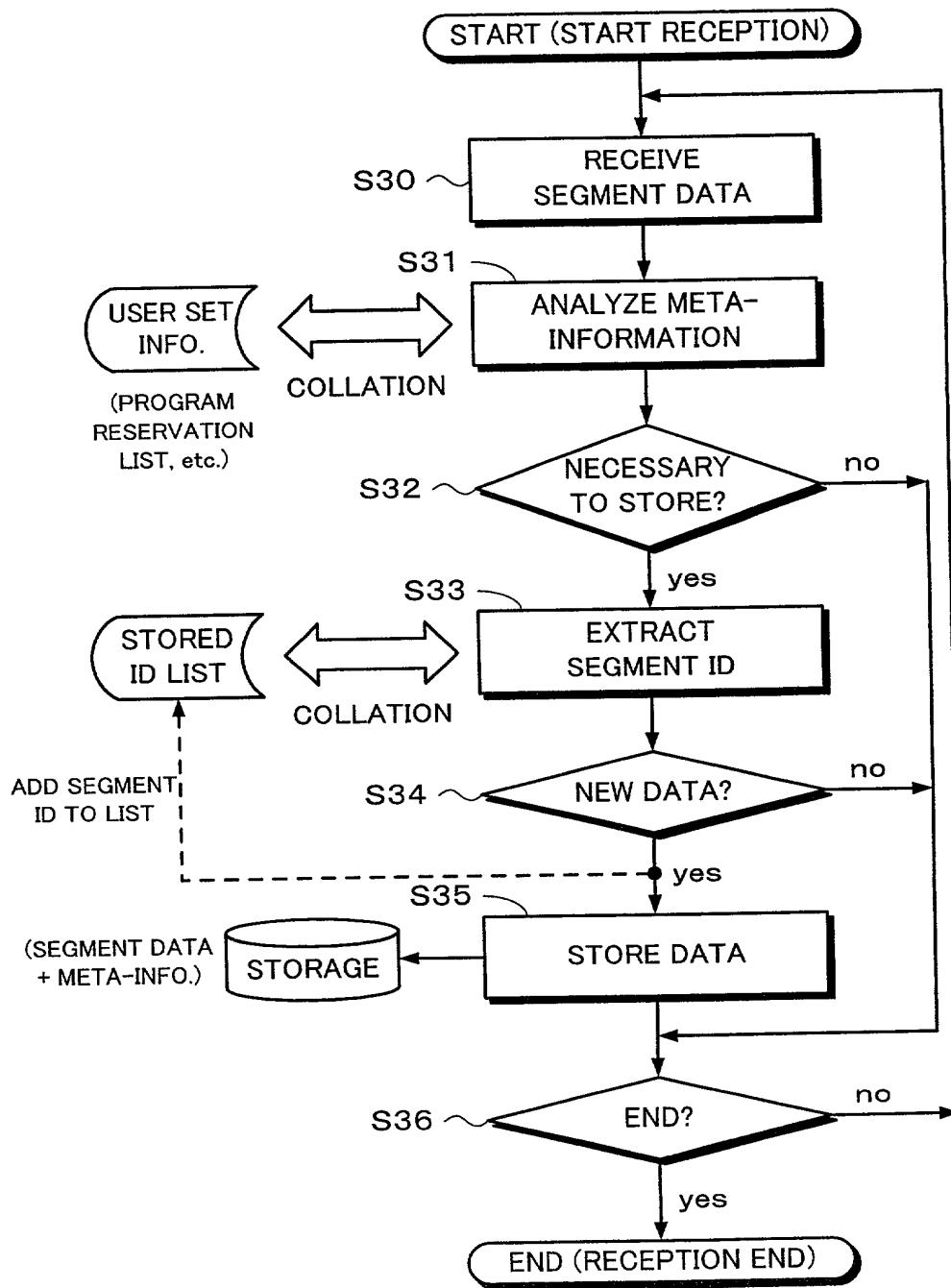


Fig. 8A

SET LEVEL	REPRODUCTION CONTENTS			
	THE NUMBER OF TEXT REPRODUCING TIMES		REPEAT PRACTICE	
	ENGLISH	JAPANESE TRANSLATION	THE NUMBER OF TIMES	PAUSE TIME
INTRODUCTORY	2 TIMES	1 TIME	2 TIMES	2 TIMES
INTERMEDIATE	1 TIME	1 TIME	2 TIMES	1 TIME
ADVANCED	1 TIME	0 TIME	1 TIME	0.8 TIME

Fig. 8B

MODE	REPRODUCTION CONTENTS
STANDARD	ALL ITEMS
REVIEW	TEXT, POINT, PRACTICE
SUMMARY REVIEW	TEXT, POINT

Fig. 9

{ PROGRAM { REVIEW { SUMMARY } { POINT } } { TEXT { ENGLISH } { JAPANESE TRANSLATION } } { POINT } { PRACTICE } }

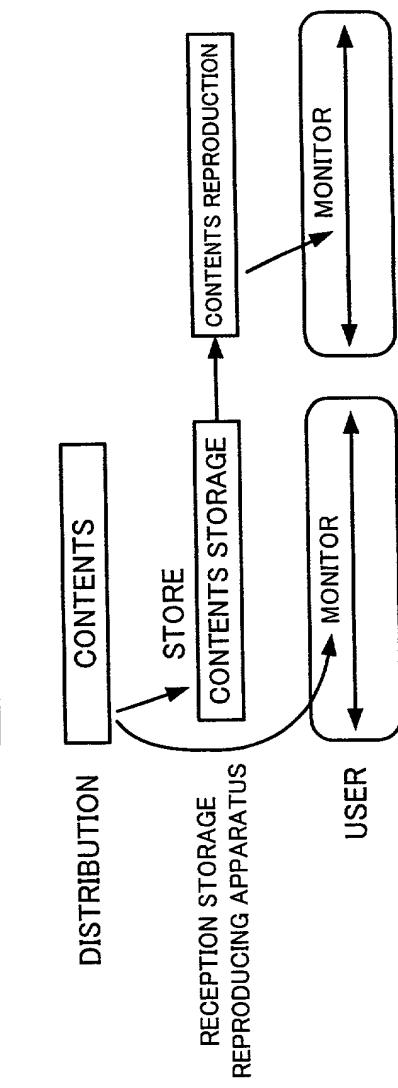


Fig. 10A

Fig. 10B

Fig. 10C

- 1 BROADCAST NETWORK
- 2 BROADCASTING STATION
- 3A, 3B INFORMATION PROVIDING SOURCE
- 4A, 4B RECEIVING TERMINAL APPARATUS
- 5 BIDIRECTIONAL NETWORK
- 12 STORAGE CONTROL UNIT
- 13 STORING UNIT
- 14 USER SET MANAGING UNIT
- 15 REPRODUCTION CONTROL UNIT
- 20 CONTENTS
- 21A ~ 20E SEGMENT DATA
- 31A ~ 31I TAG
- 40 ~ 46 ELEMENT

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PTO/SB 106 (5-00)

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特許出願宣言書及び委任状

Japanese Language Declaration

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私は、以下に記名された発明者として、ここに下記の通り宣言する：

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My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated next to my name:

下記の名称の発明について、特許請求範囲に記載され、且つ特許が求められている発明主題に関して、私は、最初、最先且つ唯一の発明者である（唯一の氏名が記載されている場合）か、或いは最初、最先且つ共同発明者である（複数の氏名が記載されている場合）と信じている。

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled.

RECEIVING APPARATUS AND METHOD

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

was filed on March 8, 2000
as United States Application Number of
PCT International Application Number PCT/JP00/01385
and was amended on
(if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

私は、上記の補正書によって補正された、特許請求範囲を含む上記明細書を検討し、且つ内容を理解していることをここに表明する。

私は、連邦規則法典第37編規則1.56に定義されている、特許性について重要な情報を開示する義務があることを認める。

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私は、ここに、以下に記載した外国での特許出願または発明者証の出願、或いは米国以外の少なくとも一国を指定している米国法典第35編第365条(a)によるPCT国際出願について、同第119条(a)(d)項又は第365条(b)項に基づいて優先権を主張するとともに、優先権を主張する本出願の出願日よりも前の出願日を有する外国での特許出願または発明者証の出願、或いはPCT国際出願については、いかなる出願も、下記の枠内をチェックすることにより示した。

Prior Foreign Application(s)

外国での先行出願

059881/1999 (Number) (番号)	Japan (Country) (国名)	8 March 1999 (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
PCT/JP00/01385 (Number) (番号)	PCT (Country) (国名)	8 March 2000 (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> (Number) (番号)	<hr/> (Country) (国名)	<hr/> (Day/Month/Year Filed)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)
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I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application for which priority is claimed.

Priority Not Claimed

優先権主張なし

8 March 1999
(Day/Month/Year Filed)

8 March 2000
(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application No.) (出願番号)	(Filing Date) (出願日)
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I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s), or 365 of any PCT international application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of application.

(Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
(現況:特許許可、係属中、放棄)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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2-1

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(Supply similar information and signature for fifth and subsequent joint inventors)

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住所

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郵便の宛先

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6-00

第六共同発明者の著名

日付

住所

国籍

郵便の宛先

(第七以下の共同発明者についても同様に記載し、著名をすること)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact al business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith (list name and registration number)

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Fifth inventor's signature

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